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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m.

Rev. Bruce Frank, Biltmore Baptist Church, Arden, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, we call on You today as the sovereign, almighty, Holy God who can heal our land.

You have said that if wisdom is lacking, ask and You will give it. And so we're asking for wisdom this day. I pray for these congressional leaders. Pray You would fill them with wisdom on what to do. Pray You would give them the courage to do just that.

Pray You surround them with people who will speak truth into their ears and who will place principle above temporary favor. You have said, "Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord."

Pray You give us a recognition of our inadequacy for the task at hand and a dependence to carry out that task, for You have said, God resists the proud, but You give grace to the humble, and we're asking for grace today.

You are a God who abhors dishonest scales. Grant a determination to do the people's business with the utmost of integrity and remind us daily of our accountability to You for the service that we give.

May the words that are written behind me "In God We Trust" be true this day, in the name of my God and my Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) come

forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND BRUCE FRANK

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. SHULER) for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend and brother in Christ, Pastor Bruce Frank, for opening the House of Representatives in prayer today.

Bruce Frank is the senior pastor at my church, Biltmore Baptist Church in Arden, North Carolina, where he provides spiritual guidance and inspiration for over 6,000 members.

Pastor Frank was born in Atlanta, Georgia, and grew up in Oklahoma and Texas. He and his wife, Lori, have two sons, Tyler and Conner. Before being called to our church, he served as pastor at Baptist churches both in Houston and Humble, Texas.

Pastor Frank has brought a renewed sense of spirit and purpose to my church and its congregants since he joined us in 2008. I am grateful that he was able to grace us with the same spirit and purpose as he led us in prayer this morning.

Pastor Frank, we love you.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 10 additional 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY STUDIES ABROAD CONSORTIUM

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TITUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University Studies Abroad Consortium. USAC developed out of an informal exchange of students and professors between the Basque Studies Program at the University of Nevada, Reno, and the University of the Basque Country in San Sebastian, Spain. Under the excellent leadership of Dr. Carmelo Urza, USAC has evolved into one of the largest and most successful study abroad programs in the United States today. Currently, there are 33 U.S. member universities offering programs in 25 countries at 39 sites, with an annual enrollment of about 2,500 students.

USAC is presently holding its annual meeting at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This brings together staff from the U.S. member universities and the resident directors of all USAC sites around the globe.

I salute them for their hard work and dedication, because we know that studying abroad provides students with a unique opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, experience, and attitudes to succeed in the global society of the 21st century.

I offer this in memory of a key member of the USAC team and a dear personal friend, Dr. Felix Menchacatorre, who passed away last August.

Estas en el corazon—you are in our heart—Felix.

BUDGET DEBATE DEFINES CLEAR DIFFERENCES

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, the debate unfolding

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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over the budget is really one that has always been a part of our Nation's dialogue. Do we want a big government and high taxes, which infringe on our individual freedom, or do we want a limited government that lets the American people keep more of the money that they earn, which expands freedom?

Democrats have a budget that says loud and clear: big government spending is going to be alive and well-fed by massive borrowing and increasing taxes by \$1.2 trillion. They will raise taxes not to pay off debt but, rather, to simply spend more money, mortgaging the future of our students, such as those at Timmerman School of Columbia.

Republicans have offered a budget that does the opposite. We want to cut spending, reduce debt, address short-term and long-term challenges, and provide more relief for American families and small businesses. Our budget is a clear sign of the confidence we have in the American people, not big government, to create jobs and put our fiscal house in order.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th and the global war on terrorism.

THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, after doubling the national debt under the failed leadership of George Bush, the Republicans unveiled their budget alternative yesterday, very appropriately on April 1, April Fool's Day.

Now, there's a pretense that they're going to restore fiscal stability through budget gimmicks, the spending freeze, no matter how great the need, bridges falling down, veterans need services, to educate our kids, budget's frozen. Well, it's frozen, sort of. There is another part that's not. After the smoke and mirrors are put up, their real agenda comes through, which is more tax cuts for the wealthy.

Here's the amazing thing. They're going to eliminate all taxes on capital gains so people who invest for a living don't have to pay taxes. We have had that argument before. But think of it, it's so beautiful. The hedge fund managers, who averaged \$260 million each a year last year creating toxic assets that are destroying our economy, claim that their income is carried interest, which is capital gains.

So the hedge fund managers who put our economy in the tank will contribute zero, zero dollars, under the Republican budget alternative to helping repair the damage in America.

Good work, guys. April fools.

BUDGET

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, unlike what the gentleman

just said, this President's budget spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much. This is the most fiscally irresponsible budget in the history of the United States.

The spending levels in the budget are just staggering. Under the President's budget, the government's spending will represent roughly 30 percent of our economy. That's not the American way.

The right way forward is the PAUL RYAN alternative budget which trims wasteful government spending and lets families and small businesses keep more of their hard-earned money.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the conservative budget proposal that rekindles prosperity, promotes financial security, invests in our future, and saves for our children's future.

Let's go, America. It's the right way to go forward.

□ 0915

A REPEATED FALSEHOOD

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. We're going to hear more of our friends from the other side of the aisle talk about their budget proposal today. It's ironic that they're proposing things that they couldn't, wouldn't enact when they ran everything.

But one of the things I find most distressing is their repeated falsehood about some \$3,100 increase in taxes on the American people based on research done by MIT. They talked about it four times again last night.

Talking to Professor John Reilly, who actually did the 2007 study, indicates that they are using an intentional misrepresentation of the study. In fact, when somebody from the Republicans "called me on March 20 and asked about it, I explained why the estimate was incorrect and what they could do to correct it."

The actual number is one-fortieth of what the Republicans are talking about. And the fact is that in the budget we have an opportunity for people who want to be legislators—not communicators—to help us allocate how those benefits will be utilized.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to traverse the well while other Members are speaking.

CIGARETTE TAX

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, all in one week we've had April Fool's Day, the Democrats' budget, and the largest increase in cigarette taxes ever. But the American people aren't foolish and they aren't in the mood for gimmicks.

Yesterday, the Federal tax on a pack of cigarettes went up—way up. Was this tax raised to get people to stop smoking? Or was it raised to pay for a massive expansion in SCHIP? Well, both, actually. And that's a crazy way to run a railroad.

SCHIP needs more money under the Democrats' plan. So we're going to need more people to start smoking, not fewer. In fact, we're going to need about 22 million new people to start smoking.

But this tax increase is going to convince people to stop smoking, which means the SCHIP will be short of funds and the folks in charge in Congress are going to want to raise taxes again soon.

I'm all for health care for kids, and I'm all for getting people to quit smoking, but I'm against health care run by bureaucrats and health care programs funded by cigarette taxes.

The American people must wonder what Democrat leaders are smoking in Washington these days. And that is no laughing matter.

BUDGET FACT CHECK: NO COMPARISON

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, the Republicans, the "Party of No," are now the "Party of No New Ideas." The budget plan they released last week is a rerun of the same failed policies that got our country into this deep financial and economic crisis, including massive tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, huge subsidies to big oil and gas companies, and no plan to bring down the cost of health care. And their approach to the financial market is to ask for more deregulation. The plan will result in deep cuts to vital services like education and public safety.

It's basically the same old thing—the Republican "Party of No." I ask my colleagues, vote for the Democratic budget and vote against the Republican alternative.

CHIEF STEVE WHEELER—TEXAS FIREMAN

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the small town of Cleveland, Texas, lost one of their finest citizens this week when Fire Chief Steve Wheeler was killed. Steve was more than a Fire Chief. He was a fireman's firefighter—dedicated to the people of his town.

Steve decided at 13 he wanted to be a fireman. He worked at the local barber-shop and watched the firefighters next door at the station jump on fire trucks—and he got the urge to do the same.

After high school, he drove an ambulance and joined the volunteer fire department. He has held just about every position there ever since—most recently, head of the Cleveland Emergency Management Department. That's